cried light-heartedly, hitting her stomach, 'I have been turned 262
into a young girl, my heart is so light.'[1]

In an hour or so men and women gathered on the village square 535
and burst into spontaneous dancing of a type I had never seen in ordinary life. Young men charged arm in arm up and down in lines singing Bemba and European songs. They imitated mission drilling and play-acting. Young girls played singing games amid [524] screams of laughter. Drums beat, and the older women and babies clapped and shouted. It was like some wild Dionysiac rabble, and indeed these people might have been taken for drunkards, except that they were better tempered, more energetic, and showed more initiative in inventing new games. The next day, they went to work early, declaring that their arms were strong. The excitement on this particular occasion was admittedly un- 152
usual, but I have described it as an example of the extreme delight of the Bemba in the sight of meat, and of meat in such profusion that it could be used for once in an utterly reckless way.

(*d*) *Other cravings.* Old men who have become accustomed to 273
drinking beer say that they feel their stomachs asking for beer. Elderly people also long for snuff and will go to any lengths to 276
get even a small pinch. *Kuba no mupitikishya ku fwaka* means 'to be in a state of begging for snuff', but I do not know if this craving has any correlation with dietetic deficiencies. Pregnant 843
women are expected to be liable to pika hungers and are said to 'ask their husbands suddenly to get them such and such'. They regularly pull lumps of clay from the walls of their huts 261
to chew, and declare their mothers taught them this custom. I have heard that some children also eat clay, but I never saw this done.

(*e*) *Monotony and diet cravings.* Most Bemba seem to be specially 262
liable to sudden cravings for different foods during the season of shortage. Whether this is due to definitely physiological reactions or to the excessive monotony of the diet at this season I do not know. To the European Bemba meals seem insipid and tedious at all seasons of the year. The foods available are not numerous, and even then they cannot all be used at any one time (cf. Chart on p. 41). There are a number of variations in the methods of cooking known, but, as in England, many of these require too much time for their preparation as a general rule. In one village

[1] *Nasangwike nshe mukashyana ico mutima wayungwike.*

[The division and eating of the meat from a large antelope shot by the author. - Ashley?]

[Erration, should be "pica", = craving for unnatural foods. - A.]

2:Richards E-5 (1930-1934)1939
FQ5 Bemba FQ5

Calendar of Events.

The weather during the month of observation must first be described, since this naturally affected the food available and the energy of the villagers. It was typical of September in this part of the world, a month of change between the end of the cold season and the beginning of the hot season. In the first week driving winds blew and the sky was often cloudy and sometimes grey. On one day the men declared it too cold to go off to their tree-cutting, and on another the women waited to grind till late in the morning because, they said, their hands were cold and slipped on the stone. The dead leaves had already fallen, and the forest turned crimson with the new young growth. It became hotter and the people more languid. Children sat about in the shade at noon and seemed too tired to run or to play violent games. There is a curious air of suspension about a native village in the hot weather. Women sit inside their hut doors and talk interminably in low murmurs, and the young girls lounge in groups of four and five in the shade and throw round polished seeds up in the air and catch them on the backs of their knuckles, a game which they play by fits and starts in a desultory way. One asked me to talk to her 'because of the boredom that is in a village when the weather is hot'.[1] By the 18th hot winds had begun to spring up, and on the 26th the first shower of thunder-rain fell. The wet weather set in in earnest in November. These notes on the climatic changes of this month should be considered in relation to the work done by the villagers during this time (cf. Chap. XVIII). I believe the slackening off of labour in this month is not only caused by uncertainty as to the coming of the rains, but also lack of energy due to the sultry heat.

Details of the activities of the people are set out below. This calendar is intended to give an impression of the work of the community as a whole, and any events such as a beer-drink or the killing of a buck, which affected the food-supply of the village.[2] Some of the notes, particularly those on the work done by the men, are unnecessarily full for a study of the food-supply proper, but they are included here in order to give some idea of the irregular

[1] *Citendwa ca mono mulili pa lumba.*

[2] From 13 September to 1 October notes on the work of each member of the village were taken. Before this time, general observations only.

2:Richards E-5 (1930-1934)1939
FQ5 Bemba FQ5

576 867 even seen a grown-up man seize a piece of fish from a small sister of 8, who expressed absolutely no surprise. An older girl will catch the wrist of a younger sister who has been given some snuff and scrape the precious powder out of the young girl's hand, leaving her only a little pinch for herself. The younger sister may make a face, but will not protest. In the same way I have seen a young husband call to his wife to throw him a lemon she had been given. She exclaimed: 'You crocodile you!' but threw him the fruit quite good-naturedly. Hence the rights of the elder or the headman or the Chief described in Chap. XIII, are based on beliefs very early inculcated, of what are a relative's dues. Here again the different attitude of European mothers is noticeable. In a society in which individual initiative is on the whole encouraged, and age has no particular prerogatives, we tend to see that the youngest child gets his fair share at the dinner table or in the nursery and often teach the elder children to 'Give it to Baby first'. The Bemba mother on the contrary always says: 'Let your elder brother (*umukalamba wobe*) have it! Give it to him first', and on this recognition of precedence the whole organization of daily life as well as the political system finally depends. Bemba children in fact do not seem to resent the rights of their elders, and I noticed that both little girls and boys often repeated the words *umukalamba wandi* ('my elder') in tones of great affection and pride. The con-
593 stant competition between the older and younger members of the family that is so pronounced in our society does not seem to exist.[1] We encourage our children to take a pride in their personal possessions, to handle them carefully, look after them, 'put them
[524] away'. Bemba children have no material possessions beyond the twig bow or the maize cob doll, but all the objects they use they are taught to yield up on demand from an elder. In adult life the
[431] man who gives presents to his elder brother, and still more the woman who honours her elder sister, is praised with particular enthusiasm.[2]

[1] Bemba brothers are not in competition with each other for the family inheritance as among the patrilineal cattle-owning people of South Africa. There is little material property to inherit, and in any case the boys marry early in life and hence join different economic and local groups.

[2] When I travelled with my older sister for some weeks in this area I noticed that whenever I carried something for her or gave her precedence, a delighted murmur went up from the watching women: 'She honours her *umukalamba*. Look, she is carrying it for the big one.' It meant conformance to their own code.

The Ceremony

It was described as a place of safety, and again as a place to idle about in, (*ukuangala*), or to rest in. One woman said it was to teach the girl that she must no longer sit about in the village square. Her place, as a married woman, was inside the hut. Another referred vaguely to the crest on top of the roof and said it was like the feathered head-dress worn by a *nacimbusa* in the old days. It was a curious example of work done with a great expenditure of effort and apparently little interest in the meaning of the emblem produced.)

In the meantime, other women were at work making a screen about four feet high. It was covered with decorated clay. A small window was made in the wall and in the centre a round lump with a feather stuck in the middle of it.

(Here again, the symbolism was complex. The screen was called the *lubondo*. It was described as the wall of the house the man would build for his bride. The boss in the centre was called the navel and was referred to in a rather sly manner. The navel is always thought of as a rather amusing and slightly obscene part of the body by the Bemba and one woman said in a shamefaced yet slightly defiant manner, 'Yes, it is to teach her to yield herself to her husband—to let him sleep with her when he wants to.')

Whether or not the esoteric significance of these *mbusa* was realized by the company present, the atmosphere in the hut was that of a rather jolly children's Christmas party in England. The girls and their parents and close relatives crowded into the house in the evening and played uproarious games in and around the shelter and the screen. There was dodging behind the screen with a good deal of giggling and shouting, a ring dance round the shelter, and a ball game played with a rolled-up piece of cloth. The company enjoyed themselves and were most impatient of requests to 'explain' what they were doing. 'We are just honouring the past,' said one girl nonchalantly, smiling and poised to catch 'the ball' a fellow was aiming at her.

The games went on till about nine at night. After this, Nangoshye, the *banacimungu* and one or two helpers walked round and round the village beating the *chisungu* rhythm on the drums until late into the night. She said the drums would let people know how important a ceremony it was.